

Strike Up the Band; It's Time for a Festive Fourth!

Duxbury Clipper
Wednesday, June 27, 2002

By BEN CRONIN

Duxbury will play host next week to its 110th Fourth of July Parade and 6th Beach Party, two annual events celebrating the 226th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and American nationhood.

The parade will start at 2 pm on July 4th, with a route running from Hall's Corner down Washington Street – where on-lookers and participants are reminded to be careful around the road work – ultimately arriving at the School Complex after taking a left onto St. George Street.

Two days later, on July 6th, the Town's beach party and bonfire will take place on Duxbury beach, with the festivities starting at 4 pm and continuing well into the evening. Trolleys and buses will be available to deliver party-goers to and from the beach, starting at 3:30 pm at the school complex. According to July 4th Activities Committee Co-Chair Joan Edgar, the bonfire, which is scheduled to start around 9 pm – or whenever darkness falls – will be slightly toned down this year after the overzealous blazes of years past attracted more revelers than Town resources and the beach could bear.

Edgar and her fellow Co-Chair Jamie MacNab have spent months overseeing the planning of the Fourth of July festivities, ensuring that the Parade and Bonfire become a



reality in 2002. The funding for the combined festivities – the Parade costs roughly \$17,000, and the Beach Party roughly \$8,000 – comes from both the Town and from private donations. While the Town contributes \$10,000 towards the cost of the festivities, most of the largesse comes from private donations, which this year has netted \$14,000 for the Committee.

The Parade's theme this year is "Heroes of the Red, White and Blue," a choice largely influenced by the events of September 11th. However, MacNab and Edgar are quick to point out that though September 11th couldn't help but play a prominent role in the planning of this year's parade, no one should feel constrained by the theme.

The parade will include more than the usual number of politicians – even for an election year. At least fifteen, but probably closer to twenty, will be marching down Washington and St. George Streets, according to Edgar. Among the can-

didates who have asked for entry papers is Republican Gubernatorial contender Mitt Romney, though Edgar and MacNab cannot confirm Romney's participation. There has been speculation that the Democrats, in order to counter Romney, might send one of their big-name candidates as well.

Politics aside, music will once again serve as one of the parade and beach party's major attractions, with multiple bands performing at both. While local groups like the Temptations and Creech and the Reggae Bubblers will play, bands from further afield will also be in attendance – including one making the trans-border trek from Canada. The Canadian band, Edgar said, went out of its way to learn patriotic American songs for this year's Fourth, in recognition of the important place this first post-September 11th Independence Day occupies in the American psyche.

This is the first year of Co-Chairmanship for Edgar and MacNab, both of whom were driven by a kind of civic duty to lend their efforts to the Fourth of July Committee.

Edgar, a native Californian, moved to Duxbury three years ago and was immediately enchanted by the small town New England charm of a yearly Fourth of July Parade.

MacNab, a lifelong

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Duxbury resident, has attended forty-four Fourth of July parades, and wanted to "step up to the plate" and do his part to make sure that Independence Day celebrations don't become a thing of the past.

The Committee, despite the efforts of its several active members and the generosity of Town Services, is a "skeleton crew" at the moment, according to MacNab.

"We desperately need people to get involved," he

said. His great fear is that, despite a jump in interest in the parade in the wake of this year's terrorist attacks, declining Committee numbers could threaten the Parade and Beach Party's existence.

"That would be a crushing blow," MacNab said.

Nevertheless, MacNab and Edgar are optimistic about this year's celebration, and inordinately grateful to those who have made it possible, from Town services like the Harbormaster's Office and the Fire Department, to private organizations, like the Village at Duxbury, which has lent the Committee use of its bus for ferrying celebrants to and from the Beach Party.

Despite the often-Herculean efforts required of Edgar, MacNab, and their fellow Committee members, they say the experience is rewarding beyond compare. Whether it's the joyful squeals of the children along the parade route or the fire-light romance of the Beach Party, the palpable evidence of happiness in Duxbury – and beyond – makes it all worthwhile. After all, what can be better than a small town Fourth of July?